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Request for the inclusion of an item in the provisional agenda of the sixty-sixth session

Observer status for the Union of South American Nations in the General Assembly

Letter dated 24 June 2011 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Guyana to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon the instructions of my Government, in its capacity as the pro tempore President of the Union of South American Nations, I have the honour, in accordance with rule 13 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, to request the inclusion in the provisional agenda of the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly of an item entitled "Observer status in the General Assembly for the Union of South American Nations".

In accordance with rule 20 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, an explanatory memorandum in support of the above-mentioned request (annex I) and a draft resolution (annex II) are attached.

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annexes could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) George **Talbot**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

11-39893 (E) 070711

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Annex I

Explanatory memorandum

I. General introduction

1. The Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) was officially established on 23 May 2008, with the signing of its Constitutive Treaty, after several years of complex negotiations at the highest political level.

2. Previously referred to as the South American Community of Nations, the Presidents of South American nations agreed to change the name of the organization in 2007 to the Union of South American Nations, indicating a commitment to the political union of those republics and the construction of a South American citizenship, with a long-term strategic vision for enhanced integration.

3. In addition to working resolutely towards the unity of all South American nations and their peoples, the Union aims to strengthen the international presence of the region and to actively participate in the consolidation of the world community, characterized by well-being, multilateralism, the rule of law, peace and international solidarity.

II. Principles and objectives

4. Article 2 of the Constitutive Treaty of the Union outlines its overarching objective, which is to build, in a participatory and consensual manner, an integration and union among its peoples in the cultural, social, economic and political fields, prioritizing political dialogue, social policies, education, energy, infrastructure, financing and the environment, among other aspects, with a view to eliminating socio-economic inequality, in order to achieve social inclusion and participation of civil society, strengthen democracy and reduce asymmetries, within the framework of strengthening the sovereignty and independence of the States.

5. The specific objectives are outlined in article 3 of the Treaty, as follows:

(a) The strengthening of the political dialogue among Member States to guarantee a space for consultation in order to reinforce South American integration and the participation of UNASUR in the international arena;

(b) Inclusive and equitable social and human development in order to eradicate poverty and overcome inequalities in the region;

(c) The eradication of illiteracy, universal access to quality education and regional recognition of courses and titles;

(d) Energy integration for the integral and sustainable use of the resources of the region, in a spirit of solidarity;

(e) The development of an infrastructure for the interconnection of the region and among our peoples, based on sustainable social and economic development criteria;

(f) Financial integration through the adoption of mechanisms compatible with the economic and fiscal policies of Member States;

(g) The protection of biodiversity, water resources and ecosystems, as well as cooperation in the prevention of catastrophes and in combating the causes and effects of climate change;

(h) The development of concrete and effective mechanisms to overcome asymmetries, thus achieving an equitable integration;

(i) The consolidation of a South American identity through the progressive recognition of the rights of nationals of a Member State resident in any of the other Member States, with the aim of attaining a South American citizenship;

(j) Universal access to social security and health services;

(k) Cooperation on issues of migration with a holistic approach, based on an unrestricted respect for human and labour rights, for migratory regularization and harmonization of policies;

(l) Economic and commercial cooperation to achieve progress and consolidation of an innovative, dynamic, transparent, equitable and balanced process focused on an effective access, promoting economic growth and development to overcome asymmetries by means of the complementarities of the economies of the countries of South America, as well as the promotion of the well-being of all sectors of the population and the reduction of poverty;

(m) Industrial and productive integration, focusing especially on the important role that small and medium-size enterprises, cooperatives, networks and other forms of productive organizations may play;

(n) The definition and implementation of common or complementary policies and projects of research, innovation, technological transfer and technological production, aimed at enhancing the region's own capacity, sustainability and technological development;

(o) The promotion of cultural diversity and the expression of the traditions and knowledge of the peoples of the region, in order to strengthen their sense of identity;

(p) Citizen participation through mechanisms for interaction and dialogue between UNASUR and the various social actors in the formulation of South American integration policies;

(q) Coordination among specialized bodies of the Member States, taking into account international norms, in order to strengthen the fight against corruption, the global drug problem, trafficking in persons, trafficking in small and light weapons, terrorism, transnational organized crime and other threats, as well as for disarmament, the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction and the elimination of landmines;

(r) The promotion of cooperation among the judicial authorities of the Member States of UNASUR;

(s) The exchange of information and experiences in matters of defence;

(t) Cooperation for the strengthening of citizen security;

(u) Sectoral cooperation as a mechanism to deepen South American integration through the exchange of information, experiences and capacity-building.

6. The Union embodies the firm commitment of its Member States to fostering a process of comprehensive and multidimensional union that, without disregarding the incorporation of the important advances achieved by the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) and the Andean Community, goes beyond the intensification of trade and the broadening of markets in order to move towards the construction of a South American identity and citizenship and the development of an integrated regional space.

7. The organization also seeks to strengthen Latin America and the Caribbean through South American unity, projecting itself to the world as a block of countries with a shared mission to contribute to the consolidation of an international community based on multilateralism and the rule of law, where sovereign equality among the States and a culture of peace, solidarity and cooperation prevail.

III. Structure

8. Pursuant to the Constitutive Treaty, the principal bodies of the Union are: the Council of Heads of State and Government, which is the main body of the Union, responsible for the political conduction of the South American integration process; the Council of Ministers for Foreign Affairs, which implements the decisions of the Council of Heads of State and Government and develops and furthers political dialogue and consensus on topics of regional and international interest; the Council of Delegates, which implements the decisions of the Council of Heads of State and Government and the resolutions of the Council of Ministers for Foreign Affairs; and the General Secretariat, which executes the mandates issued by the bodies of the Union and represents them by express delegation.

9. In addition, the Union functions with seven councils on the following themes: energy, defence, health, social development, education, culture, science, technology and innovation, as well as two working groups on financial integration and the settlement of investment-related disputes.

10. The foundation stage of the Union was completed with the entry into force of its Constitutive Treaty on 11 March 2011. The focus of Member States is now to develop and meet the plans and programmes of the different councils and working groups, and consolidate its bodies, with special attention to the strengthening of the general secretariat and its attributions.

IV. Observer status in the General Assembly

11. As a regional organization dedicated to the promotion of regional integration and the strengthening of the international presence of the region and its active participation in the consolidation of a world community characterized by multilateralism, the rule of law, peace and international solidarity, the Union of South American Nations fully adheres to the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

12. Given the clear complementarity of their shared goals, the granting of observer status in the General Assembly to the Union of South American Nations would initiate a mutually beneficial institutional dialogue between the two organizations. It would also promote coherence of efforts and open avenues for future cooperation in a wide spectrum of areas. Furthermore, obtaining observer status would greatly assist the Union in its endeavours to foster regional initiatives aimed at integration among its Member States.

Annex II

Draft resolution

Observer status for the Union of South American Nations in the General Assembly

The General Assembly,

Wishing to promote cooperation between the United Nations and the Union of South American Nations,

1. *Decides* to invite the Union of South American Nations to participate in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly in the capacity of observer;

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to take the necessary action to implement the present resolution.